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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
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Key stories in the media:

All media led with political developments at the Knesset on Monday. They reported that eight Likud "rebels" voted with the opposition to defeat by 61-54 the appointment of Vice PM Ehud Olmert and two other Likud Knesset members to permanent ministerial posts. However, in a later vote, the Knesset approved, 71-41, the separate appointments of Olmert as finance minister and Matan Vilnai (Labor Party) as science and technology minister, two of the empty posts. PM Sharon vowed to take revenge against the eight Likud MKs. Yediot (Shimon Shiffer) quoted Sharon associates as saying that Sharon is more convinced than ever that the Knesset elections should be held earlier than the scheduled date of November 2006.

The Jerusalem Post reported that EU ministers who are meeting in Brussels called on Israel Monday to "facilitate the preparations and conduct" of the upcoming PA elections. An EU statement issued after the meeting "underlined the importance of the forthcoming elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council as an essential element for progress." The Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio said that the Palestinians want the Europeans to serve as advisers at the crossing, while Israel wants the foreigners to be in charge, with the authority to carry out arrests or confiscate luggage if necessary. Leading media reported that Israeli and Palestinian officials met with Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn on Monday to hammer out the arrangement at the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. Israel Radio reported that Wolfensohn and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz met in Tel Aviv today to sum up the understandings reached by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators about the Karni and Erez crossings. The radio said that Israel's insistence on receiving closed-circuit television pictures from the Rafah crossing in real time remains an obstacle to reaching an agreement. The radio reported that PA Civilian Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan strenuously opposed this demand. Israel Radio reported that Wolfensohn is drafting a bridging document on the crossings issue, which he will ask the parties to sign.

Leading media quoted Sharon as saying Monday before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Israel would restrict the movement of Hamas officials during voting in the January 25 elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), in which the organization is participating for the first time. Sharon was quoted as saying that if Hamas participated in those elections, Israel would not hold meetings with PA officials, and would make it difficult for Hamas

members to campaign freely. Sharon also said that if Hamas was allowed to participate in the elections, there would be no easing of military restrictions in the territories in the run-up to the vote. He was also quoted as saying: "Nevertheless, Israel has no intention of disrupting elections in the PA. But we will do whatever is possible to impose difficulties on the movement of Hamas members on election day." The Jerusalem Post reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas dismissed Sharon's threat to hinder the movement of Hamas officials during voting in the PLC elections as a "flagrant intervention" in the internal affairs of the Palestinians.

Yediot reported that U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told Mofaz on Friday in Washington that Syrian President Bashar Assad is the devil and that the U.S. will punish him over his support for the terrorists in Iraq. Leading media quoted Sharon as saying on Monday before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Assad's condition is not important and that he does not intend to negotiate with Syria, even if the Syrians are interested in talks with Israel.

Israel Radio reported that the USDA will assist Israel's poor, as part of its programs around the world.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Sharon and Internal Security Minister Gideon Ezra met on Monday with Dmitry Kozak, head of counterterrorism in Chechnya and the Kremlin's envoy to southern Russia, for talks on the effectiveness of the security fence and Israel's overall success in fighting Palestinian terror. The newspaper says that the Russian government is mulling the construction of a security barrier along the border of Chechnya similar to Israel's security fence as part of its efforts to combat violence there.

Ha'aretz printed a Reuters story, according to which FM Silvan Shalom will lead Israel's delegation to the World Summit on the Information Society that will take place in Tunisia next week.

Ha'aretz reported that Indonesian FM Noer Hassan Wirajuda has sent a message thanking FM Shalom for expressing support for Indonesia after the October terrorist attack on the island of Bali. Ha'aretz writes that the message, which was conveyed by Israel's ambassador in Singapore a week ago, said that Wirajuda appreciated the letter Shalom sent him and that Indonesia was determined to step up the struggle against terrorism.

Yediot reported that the UN has asked Israel to dispatch an army unit to peacekeeping missions around the world. The newspaper also reported that the UN is requesting a medical unit from Israel, and that it is interested in purchasing advanced medical equipment from Israel -- including communications and night-vision equipment. Yediot reported that Foreign Ministry DG Ron Prosor has instructed his ministry's staff to promote cooperation with the UN.

This morning, Israel Radio reported that Israeli security forces arrested 20 Palestinian militants from Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah in the West Bank overnight.

Yediot reported that the Shin Bet has been detaining a 19-year-old settler from Elon More in the West Bank for a week on suspicion that he vandalized hundreds of olive trees belonging to the neighboring village of Salem.

Leading media reported on the Mideast peace initiative announced by Iran's FM Manuchehr Motaki on Monday. The Jerusalem Post reported that following Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statements that Israel must be wiped off the map, Turkey's key policy paper from the recent meeting of its National Security Council singled out Iran as a potential source of instability, risk, and uncertainty in the region. Maariv and other media reported that several Jews who had emigrated from Iran and were disappointed by life in Israel have returned to their native country.

Ha'aretz reported that on Monday, FM Shalom welcomed the announcement by the Swiss government that it would convene an international conference of the Red Cross next month to invite the Israeli group Magen David Adom to join the organization. Shalom reportedly called the move "the righting of a historic injustice and recognition of the important function of Magen David Adom," adding that Israel would try to make the work of the Palestinian Red Crescent easier in the West Bank.

Swiss FM Micheline Calmy-Rey announced the move on her visit to Israel about a week ago.

The Jerusalem Post reported that a delegation from the Palestinian Businessmen's Association in Gaza met separately with members of the Israel Manufacturers Association and the Israel Chamber of Commerce on Monday in an effort to initiate cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian sectors. The newspaper says that the Peres Center for Peace initiated the meeting, which was the first such event since the start of the Intifada.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue and a delegation of 39 U.S. business leaders came to Israel this week on a mission to strengthen and explore new areas for trade relations and economic cooperation with Israel.

Israel Radio reported that India will purchase 50 Israel Aircraft Industries-manufactured drones, at a cost of USD 220 million.

Yediot and Israel Radio cited a story on Italy's national television network RAI, according to which the U.S. made use of phosphor bombs during the siege of Fallujah, causing the deaths of dozens of innocent civilians.

Two public opinion polls predict Shimon Peres's victory over Histadrut Labor Federation Secretary-General MK Amir Peretz in Wednesday's primaries for Labor Party chairmanship. According to the Yediot poll, Peres beats Peretz, 49-38 percent, and Binyamin Ben-Eliezer would garner 9 percent, with 4 percent of undecided; the results of the Maariv survey project a 49-39 percent victory for Peres, with Ben-Eliezer clinching 10 percent of the votes.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post excerpted a White House transcript of a speech delivered by U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley via satellite on October 31 to the AIPAC National Summit in Los Angeles: "[President Bush] has pledged to Prime Minister Sharon that he will never ask Israel to take risks with its security to suit U.S. purposes or to suit U.S. politics -- and he never will. But if we succeed in our broader objectives in the war on terror and in Iraq, Israel will be more secure as a result."

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in The Jerusalem Post: "Ahmadinejad and Assad may get away with what they are doing.... But at least now it seems less likely they can do so than in the past."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Israel and the War against Terrorism"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post excerpted a White House transcript of a speech delivered by U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley via satellite on October 31 to the AIPAC National Summit in Los Angeles (November 8): "The spread of democracy will make the Middle East a safer neighborhood for Israel. An American retreat from Iraq, on the other hand, would only strengthen the terrorists who seek the enslavement of Iraq and the eventual destruction of Israel. It is the spread of freedom, democracy, and justice that is the antidote to Islamic extremism. Experience shows that it is not poverty, but rather alienation, that most encourages terrorism.... Only when Palestinians are able freely to express themselves through ballots rather than bombs will we be able to get on the road to security for Israel.... A prosperous, democratic Palestinian society would provide the political basis and the needed resources for the Palestinian Authority to fight the terrorists within Palestinian territory before they can threaten Israeli citizens. Israel will benefit in the long run by enacting the steps that Quartet Special Envoy Jim Wolfensohn has identified as most critical for the Palestinian economy.... As you know, President Bush is a dedicated friend of Israel. He has pledged to Prime Minister Sharon that he will never ask Israel to take risks with its security to suit U.S. purposes or to suit U.S. politics -- and he never will. But if we succeed in our broader

objectives in the war on terror and in Iraq, Israel will be more secure as a result."

II. "Propaganda and Caution"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in The Jerusalem Post (November 8): "If I had to single out one critical factor about Middle East leaders it is their choice between two basic courses of action. The first approach, common in the rest of the world but rarely seen in this region, is adjusting strategy, policy and goals to conditions. The alternative is ignoring or distorting the actual situation -- or substituting a public relations campaign for a substantive response -- giving top priority to preserving the existing system. What distinguishes these two paths is clearly not the difference between a pragmatic and irrational policy. For if a regime can survive by fighting or by ignoring the reality of the challenges it faces, that behavior is a practical strategy.... Those most imperiled are the inexperienced leaders of Iran and Syria, intoxicated by ideas.... Here, of course, one must show respect for the validity of the 'irrational' policy path of Middle East dictators. Ahmadinejad and Assad may get away with what they are doing, just as Arafat and Assad's father did and as Saddam Hussein almost did. But at least now it seems less likely they can do so than in the past."

12. France Riots:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "True, the current riots in France may be about rootlessness and alienation of minority youth, but they are not only about rootlessness and alienation. Radical Islam is part of the mix as well, and the French will ignore that at their own peril."

Block Quotes:

"The Paris Intifada"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (November 8): "The French would be wise to pay attention to the fact that these flames of alienation are being fanned and leveraged for their own use by Islamic radicals who -- as the homegrown London bombers proved in July -- are thriving on the streets of Europe. Parallels can be found with our reality. At one time the Arab-Israeli conflict looked predominantly like a territorial one. Indeed, this thinking underpinned UN Security Council Resolution 242, which created the territories-for-peace rubric. What was ignored was the religious and ideological component of the conflict.... France -- yes, ironically, France -- has now awakened to find itself facing a similar dilemma. The instinctive reaction in France to the rioting has been twofold: a pledge to restore security and to address the 'causes' of the rioting: the deprivation, discrimination, alienation, and rootlessness of the rampaging, largely Muslim, youth. One cannot argue with either of these two points. But French policy makers would be unwise to overlook the religious, ideological dimensions of the battle, and the way Islamic radicals preaching from the mosques and spewing out hatred via the Internet are able to prey on this disaffection and import a toxic ideology into France and the heart of Europe. True, the current riots in France may be about rootlessness and alienation of minority youth, but they are not only about rootlessness and alienation. Radical Islam is part of the mix as well, and the French will ignore that at their own peril."

13. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Isi Leibler, Chair of the Diaspora-Israel relations committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, and a veteran Jewish international leader, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Anti-Jewish rhetoric is now rapidly penetrating the [U.S.] political mainstream."

Block Quotes:

"Storm Clouds Ahead"

Isi Leibler, Chair of the Diaspora-Israel relations committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, and a veteran Jewish international leader, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (November 8): On the surface, the relationship between the United States and Israel has never been better.... Yet having met with a cross section of American Jewish leaders during a recent visit to New York, I fear that there are grounds for serious concern. The deterioration on the campus continues and the demonization of Israel, frequently accompanied by anti-Semitism, now transcends all other campus political issues.... It should also be noted that anti-Jewish rhetoric is now rapidly penetrating the political mainstream.... Today, we [Israel] appear to be in the process of becoming transformed into a U.S. satellite.... Prime Minister Sharon had originally promoted disengagement to Israelis largely on the basis that as a quid pro quo Bush would support Israel's retention of the major settlement blocs. But now he has apparently capitulated to all American demands and aborted all building activity, including the construction of the road link from Ma'aleh Adumim to the capital. This suggests that Sharon is becoming totally subservient to the administration."

JONES